

Moran Announces Sign-up Dates for Disaster Assistance

USDA Also Providing Refunds for CRP Penalties

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established sign-up dates for drought assistance. The sign-up for the Crop Disaster Program, which will reimburse farmers or ranchers for qualifying losses in either 2001 or 2002, will begin on June 6, with payments made shortly thereafter.

"Kansas farmers can now go to their bankers and make some solid plans for the future," Moran said. "Although we would like to see the assistance come sooner, guidelines are now in place for this disaster assistance to be distributed."

The Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003 will provide \$3.1 billion in drought aid for U.S. farmers and ranchers. It is estimated to bring over \$200 million to Kansas farmers who have been struggling through multiple years of drought.

The USDA has also announced that they are issuing refunds to eligible Kansas producers who were penalized last year, for haying or grazing acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This provision, supported by Moran, will provide refunds of \$16.4 million to producers nation-wide. Last year, some producers were assessed a 25 percent reduction in their CRP rental payments for emergency haying and grazing on CRP lands.

"The limited availability of grazing land, coupled with high feed costs, left Kansas producers with few options for feeding livestock during this past year's dry conditions," Moran said. "Now they can recoup this cost."

More specific details on the disaster payments and CRP reimbursement can be obtained at your local Farm Service Agency offices, USDA Service Centers and on the web at <http://www.usda.gov/>.

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